

**TRIP REPORT AND
CONTRIBUTION TO ACTION PLAN
FOR THE
NOWY SĄCZ PUBLIC SERVICE
CITY ZONE**

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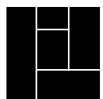
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

SUMMARY	1
BACKGROUND	1
METHODOLOGY	2
FINDINGS	3
ACTION PLAN	7
Leadership Workshop	7
Municipal Financing for Infrastructure	8
Advanced Issues in Customer Relations	9
Specialized Training	10
Economic Development Coordination and Strategy Workshop	10
Potential Technical Assistance Activities in Economic Development	11
Results/Indicators	12
Action Plan Time Line	13
APPENDIX A: PARTIAL LIST OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED	15
APPENDIX B: ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES	17

TRIP REPORT AND CONTRIBUTION TO ACTION PLAN FOR THE NOWY SACZ PUBLIC SERVICE CITY ZONE

SUMMARY

This report describes a proposed action plan for USAID assistance to the Nowy Sacz Public Service City Zone for the period April 15 through September 30, 1997. The action plan includes training and economic development activities, and this responds to two of the three areas of assistance that USAID is providing to the Zone. The plan is based on a one week visit to Nowy Sacz from March 17-21, 1997 by a three-person team working under the USAID contract with the Urban Institute Consortium.

BACKGROUND

The Nowy Sacz Public Service City Zone (henceforth referred to as the Zone) officially began to function on January 1, 1997. The Zone is a combined union of 14 gminas serving slightly under 300,000 residents. The Zone provides some of the services previously delivered by the national government administration. These services include management of the budget for health care and secondary education as well as services related to real estate, building inspection, driver and automobile licensing, and administration of provincial and national roads. The PSCZ is the first effort in Poland to establish a second level of local self government and, as a result, has attracted a great deal of interest in Poland.

USAID provided assistance in establishing the PSCZ during 1996 through the DAI contract. Much of this assistance was directed through the Department of Public Economy and Administration in the Krakow Academy of Economics. The Department assessed the costs of the tasks to be taken over by the Zone, provided initial training for the zone staff, developed a proposed program for economic development, and developed a monitoring system for the functioning of the Zone. The Urban Institute Consortium initiated a dialog with the PSCZ in July 1996 about additional USAID assistance. Zone officials indicated that the Zone would be interested in receiving assistance in three areas: 1) addressing the impact of implementing the PSCZ on affected employees, 2) educating the public about the changes resulting from establishing the Zone, and 3) assessing the economic development potential of the Nowy Sacz zone area.

The Urban Institute Consortium fielded a three person team in October 1996 to assess opportunities in these three areas, and this team identified a preliminary set of priorities in each area. Building upon this initial assessment team, UIC organized another visit described in this report to develop a specific action plan for USAID assistance. This team, which developed a specific action plan for assistance until September 30, 1997, consisted of three people who had combined expertise in the areas of economic development, training, organizational development, and citizen participation. A public information consultant is currently scheduled to develop an action plan for that component in June, the substance of which will build on the results of a leadership workshop for senior zone managers and board members proposed for early June.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology that the team used consisted of the following:

- Reviewed documents generated during previous UIC assistance visits to the Zone
- Attended a coordination meeting with other key contributors to the zone, which included a report from a Citizen Democracy Corps volunteer who just completed a two-week assignment in Nowy Sacz.
- Held an initial orientation meeting with the foreign assistance coordinator of the Zone and the city coordinator from the Krakow Academy of Economics.
- Interviewed and collected data from a variety of sources. The team met with, among others, top Zone managers, Zone employees, several gmina mayors, officials from the City of Nowy Sacz, officials from the Regional Labor Office and the Voivodship, the Chamber of Commerce leadership, and local business people.
- Debriefed the Governor and Executive Director of the Zone on the last day in Nowy Sacz at which the proposed action plan was presented.
- Met with two professors from the Krakow Academy of Economics to discuss collaboration on some of the key activities proposed in the action plan for the zone.
- Debriefed USAID and Urban Institute staff.

A partial list of persons interviewed is included as Appendix A.

FINDINGS

The team had three overall findings.

1. The current reality of the Zone does not match the lofty goals described by Zone managers, board members and supporters.

There are high expectations for the Zone. For many in Poland, the Zone represents an opportunity to provide services more efficiently through joint effort than most gminas can do on an individual basis. Although the Zone clearly has great potential and lofty goals, the reality is quite different. The Zone has only been operating for three months. For the most part, Zone employees are doing the same jobs they were doing before the Zone was established, are being managed by the same supervisors, and often are working in the same exact physical location. When asked, most see no difference in their jobs now than before the Zone was established. The main difference is that they are working for a level of self-government instead of the central government administration and therefore are subject to a different set of laws and regulations.

At present, the zone is carrying out a limited set of regulatory, licensing and disbursing services that are prescribed by law and administrative procedure. Their budget is clearly attached to these responsibilities, and they appear to have very little, if any, discretionary resources to engage in additional work in which citizens are very interested (e.g., to improve telephone service, roads, schools and health care). Indeed, many of their current functions (e.g., inspecting buildings) actually have a greater opportunity for contentious interactions with citizens rather than ones which would result in a perceived improvement in local quality of life (e.g., more or improved roads).

To take a specific example, the Zone has taken over responsibility for secondary education and health care, but in effect the primary role is as paymaster. In education, there are 16 secondary schools in the Zone, but there is only one Zone employee responsible for education. Virtually all decision-making remains with the Ministry of Education. The leadership of the Zone see the potential, but as yet have not established a clear set of priorities that are matched with the necessary resources to achieve them.

On one hand, then, the Zone has extremely limited resources with which to expand its role from the functions it is currently carrying out. On the other, many key organizers of the Zone have high expectations about what it can accomplish, and how that can be a model for the rest of Poland. There is a bit of a disconnect here.

2. **Coordinating economic development activities and agreeing on a Zone economic development strategy are seen as important steps in guiding and pushing development of the Zone; however, the appropriate role of the PSCZ in the economic development arena is as yet unclear and needs to be defined.**

An economic development commission has been appointed consisting of 10 gmina representatives and five non local government members. This is an official commission of the Zone assembly. However, a statement made by a restaurant owner in Nowy Sacz summarizes one of the key challenges for economic development progress in the Zone:

“Poland loses potential due to a lack of integration and coordination.”

A Zone strategy has to be developed in an environment where there are many current actors in economic development and many economic development activities. Foreign donors support projects in economic development. Economic development strategic plans are being written at several levels. The city of Nowy Sacz is creating an economic development department and commission. The Voivodship has just completed a development plan which includes an economic development section. There are PHARE supported projects in rural development including agro tourism and small enterprise support as well as other agricultural projects. The Business Advisory Center located at the business school and associated with the Chamber of Commerce offers business development services such as help with drafting business plans and applications for finance. The Voivodship is planning to establish a public/private Agency for Economic Development which will provide business support services. The Table in Appendix B summarizes economic development activities of organizations active in the Nowy Sacz region.

The high level of current activity, overlapping scopes of many organizations and diversity of projects raises questions about the appropriate role for Zone in economic development. The Wagner report suggested that the city and Zone might each approach economic development independently although coordinating activities. However, both the city and Zone are part of a Voivodship which itself is undertaking economic development activities and strategic planning. More than simple coordination is required. Rather, some agreement should be sought about how the economic development pie should be divided and responsibilities assigned among the major actors.

Several thrusts in economic development have been noted in previous reports and came up again during this visit. In each case, what tasks the Zone can usefully perform raises questions but also presents opportunities that can be realized through the unique structure of the Zone.

Planning. The financial and human resources required to assemble valid data, undertake surveys, perform analysis, and draft a meaningful development strategy and plan are significant. Absent new external funds, the Zone is in a particularly difficult situation in terms of providing staff and funds to the Zone Economic Development Commission to support development of a Zone strategic plan. A proposal to undertake such planning from the Krakow Academy for Economics has a rough budget estimate of about \$80,000. Both the Voivodship and Nowy Sacz city have staff and financial resources in the form of Economic Development Departments that can be utilized for plan preparation while the Zone lacks these resources. Funding and staff aside, significant questions are:



- How does the Zone add value to what is already being done and avoid expending resources on planning activities that duplicate or overlap with those of other agencies? What is the appropriate niche for the Zone in economic development strategy and plan development?
- Does the Zone represent natural groupings of gminas having common economic interests? The Zone represents about a third of the gminas in the Voivodship. Economic development opportunities are likely to cross Zone boundaries. For example, in tourism development southern Zone gminas may have more in common with their non Zone gmina neighbors East and West, than with their northern Zone partners.

Tourism. Tourism is viewed as an underutilized strength by many Zone gminas. Some limitations to its further development are well understood: lack of adequate tourist infrastructure being a leading negative factor. Other limitations may not be as obvious such as the competition for the pool of tourist dollars with other regions in Poland, and increasing spending on international tourism by Polish tourists. As emphasized by the Director of FAPA, strategy, plans and activities must be based on good data and real numbers.

- What is the tourism revenue potential of gminas in the Zone? What investments are required to achieve that potential? What are the priorities for these investments?
- In terms of expected payoffs how do investments made in tourism development compare to those in other sectors. How well do jobs in tourism match with the skills and career goals of the local work force?
- Competently done analysis required to answer these questions is also a prime tool for seeking investment funding from both the public and private sectors.

Infrastructure. Infrastructure limitations are consistently highlighted as priority problems in economic development of the Zone and region. Gmina master plans are in preparation and a physical plan has recently been prepared at the Voivodship level. Assuming these plans accurately reflect needs and priorities, further planning at a Zone level may not be needed. However, looking for cooperative arrangements in, for example, solid waste management, could result in better service, savings and lower financing costs. Packaging Zone wide, or multi gmina infrastructure investments could be an attractive Zone service.

Entrepreneurship and business development. As with planning, there are many organizations offering services and underwriting projects in this sector. The challenge for the Zone is to identify the specific needs that are not being adequately met and that the Zone has a particular advantage in addressing. A potential strategy is seeking funding of Zone wide, or sub Zone projects such as business incubators that can take advantage of the Zone structure to coordinate activities.

It was possible to talk with only a few private businessmen, but from those interviews and by noting the small memberships of organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce (150), it appears that existing organizations may not be meeting representational needs of businesses. In fact, businessmen interviewed reported that their major source of experience exchange and advice was informal gatherings. Their major

interaction with government was with local officials. Gmina officials work closely with local businesses and know the problems they face. The Zone could provide both a business forum and undertake a representational role for issues at the Voivodship and higher levels that impact Zone businesses.

3. Zone employees have not yet completed the transition from working for the central government administration to local government. In addition, they have a growing awareness of the importance of improved customer relations, but have not developed the skills to do so.

Most of the Zone employees previously worked for the central administration. Since the Zone is considered a local government entity, it operates within a different legal framework and set of procedures. For example, local government finance is different than central administration finance, which most employees are familiar with. Although Zone employees have been exposed to local government laws, they do not yet feel comfortable in applying them in day to day situations. This type of training will require very specialized training in such topics as the legal aspects of building inspection, increased familiarity with the Road Traffic Law, teachers' social security, and zoning. This training will require specific knowledge of local government laws in the areas in which the Zone is currently providing services.

Zone employees also expressed interest in improving their skills in dealing with the public. Employees understand that as a local government entity, the Zone offers the opportunity to have closer contact with the public. The Krakow Academy has provided some training in customer relations, but employees expressed interest in further developing their skills. One of the building inspectors interviewed said that interactions with the public often led to conflict and stressful situations. Employees talked openly about the need for conflict management skills and negotiations skills to better handle their interactions with the public.

ACTION PLAN

Leadership Workshop

Summary

This intensive, residential workshop will help transform zone leadership and make a substantial shift towards a "new" organization with shared vision and values. The workshop will integrate short modules on key topics followed by real work on zone issues, going back and forth between theory and practice. The short modules will include the following: Leadership and management and the impact of each on organizational effectiveness, the structure and purpose of vision and values, elements of communication, team effectiveness research, definition and assessment. In addition to substantive management training, the operational output would include Zone vision and values which are consistent with strategic goals and resources. Where there are new (and perhaps more "lofty") goals, the leadership would be assisted to generate ways to leverage resources to move forward.

This workshop would be followed by 1-2 day workshops. The topics for these short workshops would be determined after the residential workshop, but would help monitor progress and focus on specific management skills.



Objectives

- Develop and agree on vision, strategic goals and organizational values for the Zone.
- Identify internal and external communication channels.
- Define the Zone team concept and desirable levels of teamwork.
- Develop action plans to match strategic goals.

Who Should Come: The Governor, Executive Director, the Board and managers and supervisors.

When: We propose this as a four day residential workshop to be done in late May or early June. There should be a follow-up 1-2 workshop in September.

Who trains: TRG in conjunction with the Krakow Academy of Economics.

Municipal Financing for Infrastructure

Summary

This course would be promoted by the Zone and aimed at gmina authorities who wish to learn practical techniques and requirements for doing what is necessary to put themselves in a position to obtain financing for municipal infrastructure projects.

Many needs of Zone gminas require capital investments in infrastructure. Pay-as-you-go financing cannot support the level of investment that has to be made in such projects as airport development, roads, landfills, water systems and so on. Long-term gmina borrowing can generate needed capital, but the capacity to support this debt needs to be carefully assessed. To assist in this assessment process, computer based tools (e.g., the Basic Gmina Finance Analysis Model) for analyzing gmina finance and debt carrying capacity have been developed and applied through a USAID sponsored project. It is the intent of the training to teach participants to use an adaptation of the financial analysis tools that is more suited for smaller gminas.

Methodologically, the training will take one of two paths: (1) It will be based on actually using the tool in Nowy Sacz city while, at the same time, using this as a case to train an appropriate financial person from each of the smaller gminas or (2) it will be a direct training program which includes appropriate participation from all gminas. Eventually, depending on future Zone resources, Zone staff could be trained to run the training program and to provide follow-up technical assistance to small gminas or groups of gminas. At present, the Zone does not appear to have the resources to play this role.

The tool will also help the Zone consolidate financial data so that joint project finance of infrastructure projects can be assessed.

Objectives

- Identify the requirements for obtaining financing through bonds, including ways to repay debt (e.g., user fees, general revenue).
- Use the Basic Gmina Financial Analysis Model (or an adaptation for small gminas) to determine debt carrying capacity.
- Explore ways to form private-public partnerships as an alternate to borrowing.

Who Should Come: Local gmina authorities responsible for obtaining municipal financing.

When: We propose this as a 4-5 day workshop to be done in July or September.

Who Trains: This course should be designed and trained by those in the UIC who deal with municipal financing. TRG can provide assistance in the area of training methodology.

Advanced Issues in Customer Relations



Summary

This course builds on the course already offered by the Academy which focused on some basic issues of social communication with customers. Topics to be addressed in this advanced course include ways to communicate with customers in a positive manner from the beginning to the end of a 'customer' interaction; soliciting input from customers; solving customer problems through the everyday use of negotiation skills; applying different methods of managing conflicts which are appropriate to particular situations; and communicating positive messages about the Zone as part of everyday interactions with citizens.

Objectives

- Enhance customer orientation of Zone employees (and eventually gmina employees).
- Manage disagreement and conflict in a "customer-friendly" manner.
- Use negotiation skills to solve everyday problems with customers.
- Reduce stress that comes from difficult customers relations.

Participants: All zone managers, employees; open to some gmina participants

Who trains: As TRG does courses similar to this in the US and abroad, it will adapt and design the course in conjunction with the Academy; it will then help train appropriate Academy designees to deliver the course; and TRG will co-deliver two or three courses until the Academy trainers are equipped to train it on their own. In order to capitalize on travel time, it may be best if these courses are run on consecutive weeks, with the first course occurring on week one, and the next two courses happening during the second week.

How long: This is a two/three day intensive course which includes much practice, and it is best delivered on continuous full working days.

Specialized Training

Summary

This activity consists of a series of courses addressing specific training needs of Zone employees. In many cases, these needs are related to the transition from working for the central government administration to self government. The laws are different and although employees have been exposed to the new set of laws, they are not comfortable in applying them to real life situations. In addition to legal issues, Zone employees have technical training needs in their specific areas. These include specific issues related to building construction, road management, real estate, health care, and education. Employees also have computer training needs although more computer training should probably be delayed until the Zone has the funds to buy more computers.

Training courses will take place, for the most part, during regular working hours and not on weekends, as has been the case so far. Appendix B provides a more complete description of the specialized training courses that comprise this activity.

Objectives

- Complete the transition from working for the central administration to self government.
- Upgrade the technical skills of Zone employees.

Participants: Specialized training will be aimed at all Zone employees.

Trainers: The Krakow Academy of Economics will provide all specialized training. The Academy will draw upon its diverse resources to staff different courses.

Economic Development Coordination and Strategy Workshop

Summary

There is a legitimate desire on the part of Zone officials to move past the assessment stage into concrete actions in economic development. However, determining the most effective role for the Zone is critical. Therefore the Action Plan for economic development starts with a Coordination and Strategy Workshop. The most important outcomes expected from the workshop will be a Zone economic development strategy and plan of action for the next year.

This workshop should take place in July. The length of the workshop is expected to be 4-5 days broken into two major components: coordination and information exchange, and Zone strategy and action plan development. The workshop will be preceded by facilitator interviews of key Zone participants, specifically members of the Economic Development Commission and the Zone President and Executive Director, about their expectations concerning the products and results expected from the workshop. These interviews and discussions will set the final agenda, but the workshop is expected to include the sessions

described below. Facilitation of the workshop will be by Urban Institute consultants and representatives of the Krakow Academy of Economics.

Objectives

- Enable an exchange of information among those organizations and agencies with significant economic development activities taking place in or impacting on the Zone gminas.
- Given this information exchange as a context, explore and agree on an economic development strategy statement for the Zone which clearly identifies the Zone's role in the overall mix of economic development activities taking place.
- Agree on a detailed near-term (12 month) action plan for economic development activities, specifically identifying those to be supported by the Pilot LGPP (through the end of September) including specialist technical assistance.

Participants: Representatives of relevant organizations including those listed in Table One plus additional groups who may have been missed during this consultancy, members of the Zone Economic Development Commission and Zone leaders. It is proposed that the information exchange part of the workshop include broader participation while the segment of the workshop which focuses on the strategy and near term action plan be allocated to a smaller workshop group made up of Zone and gmina representatives.

Length: Approximately four days (two days for the information sharing portion of the workshop and about two for the strategy part).

Who facilitates both sessions: RTI would work with TRG and the Academy to design and deliver the workshop.

Potential Technical Assistance Activities in Economic Development

An advantage of the Zone structure is that technical assistance needs of several gminas can be addressed in common thereby using resources more efficiently. Furthermore, joint gmina proposals can attract assistance that individual gminas could not obtain. The Pilot LGPP offers an opportunity for the Zone to develop technical assistance coordination, assessment, packaging and management capacity by developing proposals for technical assistance through the program. Specific proposals will be based on the strategy and action plan resulting from the Economic Development Strategy Coordination Workshop. Important results expected from this workshop will be determination of what needs can be appropriately addressed at the Zone level, what technical assistance is required by Zone gminas that is not being offered by other levels or through other programs, and what coordination must be established. Several areas seem obvious candidates for specialist technical assistance:

- Tourism Development: market analysis, tourist infrastructure requirements, services improvement, investment plans.

- Wholesale Market (Commodity Exchange): business plan.
- Business Support and Representation: loan programs, training, investment promotion, local business lobbying and representation.

Results/Indicators

If the activities recommended are undertaken, it is likely that the following results will be achieved by the end of September:

- An agreed upon set of priorities for the Zone administration that is consistent with resources available or obtainable, and an action plan to achieve the priorities.
- Zone leadership skills present which are used to help align the workforce with the priorities and action plans and which reinforce an effective customer orientation.
- A Zone workforce that is more customer oriented and provides services in a local government context.
- An overall summary of present economic development activities currently underway in the Zone, and a plan for generating an economic development strategy in the Zone area that includes agreement about the role of the Zone administration in Economic Development; this summary and plan will have been produced with broad participation of diverse stakeholders in the Zone.
- Small gminas in the zone will have some of the tools they need to analyze their present financial capabilities, and (where qualified) they will have tools to apply for money for infrastructure projects either alone or in conjunction with other gminas.
- At least one technical assistance package completed with concrete results in terms of Zone actions underway in the specific area.

Once the overall plan is approved by the Zone, USAID and the project, appropriate indicators can be developed for each of these results.

Action Plan Time Line

April

- Get the final report and suggested action plan finished, translated and sent to Zone authorities by *April 15*.
- Obtain appropriate approvals at the Zone level and USAID by the *end of April* at the latest.

May - September



- Continue to offer specialized training courses throughout this period.

May

- Implement the ½-1 day decision-makers' workshop (to be done by the Zone prior to the Leadership development workshop).
- Design the Leadership workshop.

June

- Deliver the Leadership workshop.
- Prepare for the Economic Coordination and Planning Workshop.

July

- Deliver the Economic Coordination and Planning Workshop.

July or September

- Do the first edition of the Municipal Infrastructure Financing Workshop.
- Design and deliver the Advanced Customer Relations Workshop. Finish at least three workshops by the end of September.
- Initiate the first technical assistance activity.

Optional Activities Time Line (Time to be determined once it is decided which of these are to be undertaken. Further discussion with Zone management is necessary to make a final decision and to determine a time schedule.)

- Entrepreneurial Secondary School Workshops.
- Small business enterprise “voice” in Zone economic development.
- Possible assistance with the commodity exchange idea.

Next Steps

- The consultant team will complete the report and send it to the Urban Institute for review and translation. (early April).

- The UIC will translate the report and send it to the Zone. (mid-April)
- The Zone will review the report and approve the action plan. (mid- to late-April)
- The UIC will implement the first activity in May.

APPENDIX A

PARTIAL LIST OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED

Rudolf Borusiewicz - Governor, Nowy Sacz Public Service City Zone
Andrzej Czerwinski - President, City of Nowy Sacz
Krystyna Dabrowska-Baba - Economic Development Office, Voivodship of Nowy Sacz
Franciszek Kadzik - Director, FAPA
K. Kordys - Head of the Department of Transport and Communication
Wiestawa Krzesdowiak - Vice Treasurer, Public Service City Zone
Tadeusz Kudlach - Professor, Krakow Academy of Economics
Wojciech Piech - Secretary, City of Nowy Sacz
Jerzy Poltorak - Head of the Department of Construction, Public Service City Zone
Michal Ruthowski - Mayor, Stalowej Woli
Stanislawa Scwarlo - Regional Labor Office
Zbigniew Stanik - Inspectorate of Regional Office of Ministry of Education
Z. Szewczyk - Head of the Department of Organization, Public City Service Zone
Stanislaw Walkiewicz - Mayor, Starachowice
Jan Wiktor - Professor, Krakow Academy of Economics
M. Wojcik - Executive Director, Nowy Sacz Public Service City Zone
Mara Yozwrak - Acting Department Head, Geodesics, Public Service City Zone

We also did focus groups with a cross-section of Zone employees.



APPENDIX B

ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Organiz ation	Cover age/S cope	Repre sents	Services & Activities
Voivods hip Econom ic Develop ment Depart ment	Voivo dship	Nation al gover nment at local level	Privatization of state enterprises, business promotion, lists of available facilities, trade promotion, supervision of business registry, strategic planning, heads up physical planning. Has physical plan for the Voivodship which includes economic development strategy. Is working to establish a public/private Agency for Economic Development to provide business support services.
Nowy Sac Depart ment of Social and Econom ic Develop ment	City (80,00 0)	City popul ation	In formation - will have 3 persons; Director to be hired externally, will form ED Commission, will promote city, seek investors, seek businesses, write strategic plan, advise on public works investments.
Public Service City Zone	14 Gmin as	Zone Gmin a gover nment s	Has established an Economic Development a Commission with 10 Gmina representatives and 5 non government members. Intends to promote economic development and coordinate activities of Zone gminas.

APPENDIX B (Continued)

Organization	Coverage/Scope	Representatives	Services & Activities
Tourism Information Office (Nowy Sacz)	Voivodship	----	Tourist information, services, and promotion has multilingual staff, and can reserve accommodation, also houses the two programs below.
Agro-Tourism Project (FDPA)	SE Poland	Now, about 100 farmers who let rooms in rural areas	Trains farm families on how to offer agro-tourism, assists with finding renovation capital, does promotion and coordinates rentals.
Rural Enterprise Development Project (FAPA)	Voivodship	Oriented to rural women	Assists with all aspects of small business development and makes small start-up loans (ave: NPZI 8000). About 50 - 60 loans made per year.
Merchant's Chamber	City (?) Voivodship		These organizations were mentioned in several interviews, but were not visited.
Agricultural Chamber	(?)		
Crafts/Tades Chamber			